

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method of developing product characteristics for a new product comprising the steps of:

- 5 generating a plurality of product attributes;
 classifying each of said attributes;
 generating a preferred product brand position
 as a function of said product attributes; and
10 generating target product characteristics as
a function of said classified product attributes and
said preferred product brand position, said target
product characteristics representing customer-driven
objectives for each of said plurality of product
attributes.

15 2. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein
the step of generating a plurality of product
attributes comprises the steps of providing a plurality
of summary attributes and a clarifying definition for
each of said summary attributes, said clarifying
20 definition providing a relationship between each of
said product attributes and the type of product under
development.

25 3. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein
the step of generating a plurality of product
attributes includes the step of providing a detailed
definition for each of said product attributes, each of
said detailed definitions providing a context for each
attribute as it relates to the product under
development.

30 4. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein
the step of classifying each of said attributes

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32 includes the step of placing each attribute in one of three classes wherein said first class represents attributes which differentiate the product from competing products, said second class represents important attributes, but which do not differentiate the new product from competing products, and said third class represents otherwise desirable product attributes.

5 10 5. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of ranking each of said product attributes.

15 6. A method as recited in claim 4 further comprising the step of ranking each of said product attributes, said rank being related to each of said classes such that each of said attributes in said first class have a higher rank than each of said attributes in said second class and each of said attributes in said second class have a higher rank than each of said attributes in said third class.

20 7. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of generating a primary brand position as a function of said product attributes.

25 8. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of generating a present product brand position as a function of said product attributes.

30 9. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of generating a preferred product brand position as a function of said product attributes includes the steps of identifying a competitive set of products, and associating each of said product

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attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set.

10. A method as recited in claim 9 wherein the step of associating each of said product attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each product attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a desire for the product attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the product attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the product attribute to be competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the product attribute to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

11. A method as recited in claim 7 wherein the step of generating a primary brand position as a function of said product attributes includes the steps of identifying a competitive set of products, and associating each of said product attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set.

12. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein the step of associating each of said product attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each product attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a desire for the product attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the product

attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the product attribute to be competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the product attribute to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

13. A method of developing product characteristics for a new automotive vehicle comprising the steps of:

generating a plurality of vehicle attributes, said plurality including at least attributes from each of the following groups of vehicle characteristics: usage experience, driving experience, and design;

generating a preferred vehicle brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes; and

generating target vehicle characteristics as a function of said vehicle attributes and said preferred vehicle brand position, said target vehicle characteristics representing customer-driven objectives for each of said plurality of vehicle attributes.

14. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the step of generating a plurality of vehicle attributes comprises the steps of providing a plurality of summary attributes and a clarifying definition for each of said summary attributes said clarifying definition providing further detail relating each of said vehicle attributes to a vehicle characteristic.

15. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the step of generating a plurality of vehicle attributes includes the step of providing a detailed definition for each of said vehicle attributes each of

said detailed definitions providing a context for each attribute as it relates to the vehicle under development.

16. A method as recited in claim 13 further comprising the step of classifying each of said vehicle attributes.

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BS 17. A method as recited in claim 16 wherein the step of classifying each of said vehicle attributes includes the step of placing each attribute in one of three classes wherein said first class represents attributes which will differentiate the vehicle from competing vehicles, said second class represents important attributes, but which do not differentiate the vehicle from competing vehicles, and said third class represents otherwise desirable vehicle attributes.

18. A method as recited in claim 13 further comprising the step of ranking each of said vehicle attributes.

19. A method as recited in claim 17 further comprising the step of ranking each of said vehicle attributes, said rank being related to each of said classes such that each of said attributes in said first class have a higher rank than each of said attributes in said second class and each of said attributes in said second class have a higher rank than each of said attributes in said third class.

20. A method as recited in claim 13 further comprising the step of generating a primary brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes.

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21. A method as recited in claim 13 further comprising the step of generating a present product brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes.

5 22. A method as recited in claim 13 wherein the step of generating a preferred vehicle brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes includes the steps of identifying a competitive set of
10 attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set.

23. A method as recited in claim 22 wherein the step of associating each of said vehicle attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said
15 competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each vehicle attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the vehicle
20 attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute
25 to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

24. A method as recited in claim 20 wherein the step of generating a primary brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes includes the steps
30 of identifying a competitive set of products, and associating each of said vehicle attributes with a

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preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set.

25. A method as recited in claim 24 wherein the step of associating each of said vehicle attributes with a preferred competitive level with respect to said competitive set includes the step of prioritizing each vehicle attribute in one of four levels, said first level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be a leader (L) with respect to the competitive set, said second level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be among the leaders (A) with respect to the competitive set, said third level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be competitive (C) with respect to the competitive set, and said fourth level representing a desire for the vehicle attribute to be minimally competitive (M) with respect to the competitive set.

26. A method as recited in claim 16 wherein the step of classifying each of said attributes includes the step of classifying design attributes differently than usage experience attributes and driving experience attributes.

27. A method as recited in claim 26 wherein the step of classifying each of said attributes includes the step of classifying each design attribute on a scale having more gradients than the classification scale for classifying usage experience attributes or driving experience attributes.

28. A method of developing product characteristics for a new automotive vehicle comprising the steps of:·

generating a plurality of vehicle attributes,
5 said plurality including at least attributes from each
of the following groups of vehicle characteristics:
usage experience, driving experience, and design;

providing target customer characteristics;
providing target vehicle image
characteristics; thereafter

generating a preferred vehicle brand position as a function of said vehicle attributes, said target customer characteristics, and said target vehicle image characteristics; and

15 generating target vehicle objectives as a
function of said vehicle attributes and said preferred
vehicle brand position, said target vehicle objectives
representing customer-driven and image-driven
characteristics for each of said plurality of vehicle
20 attributes.

29. A method as recited in claim 28 wherein the step of providing target customer characteristics comprises the step of providing a brand positioning summary.

25 30. A method as recited in claim 29 wherein
said brand positioning summary includes target customer
defining characteristics, target customer selection
rationales, a summary of the new vehicles' role in the
product portfolio, a competitive assessment, enduring
30 reasons why a customer may purchase the new vehicle,
and pricing considerations.

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31. A method as recited in claim 28 wherein the step of providing target vehicle image characteristics comprises the step of providing a brand bullseye.

5 32. A method as recited in claim 28 further comprising the step of providing a cross-functional product team and wherein said cross-functional product team is responsible for the steps of generating a preferred vehicle brand position and generating target
10 vehicle objectives.

33. A method as recited in claim 32 wherein said cross-functional product team includes at least one member from each of the following corporate departments: vehicle program management, marketing,
15 purchasing, finance, engineering, and design.

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